



Rejoicing
Luke 2:8-20
Fourth Sunday of Advent
December 23, 2012
Pastor Lyle L. Wahl

Theme: **You Can Always Experience God's Gift Of Joy.**

Serious Obstacles To Joy.

1. For the shepherds. (8-9)
2. For us.

Significant Clarifications About Joy.

1. What it is not.
2. What it is.
(9-14; cf. Nehemiah 8:10; Psalm 4:7-8; 16:11; Ecclesiastes 2:26; Jeremiah 15:16; John 15:11; 16:22-24; 2 Corinthians 7:4; Galatians 5:22; Philippians 4:4; 1 John 1:4; Hebrews 12:2; James 1:2-4; 1 Peter 1:6-9; 4:12-14; 3 John 1:4)

Satisfying Experiences Of Joy.

1. Overflowing praise to God.
(20; cf. 1 Chronicles 16:25-34; Psalm 33:1; 47:1)
2. Passing on the good news of great joy to others.
(17-18; cf. Luke 15:6, 9, 10, 32)

In My Life This Week

(As you use this daily guide, write out your observations and responses on a separate piece of paper and save them with this sheet for reference.)

Monday. Tomorrow is Christmas (not that you needed a reminder). With all that is going on, are you rejoicing? Are you feeling and expressing the gift of God's joy? Do you have a fairly good handle on what true joy from God is? Check the outline and the references listed there to review and clarify your understanding of joy. Then remember that we described joy as God's gift of steadfast, delightful certainty. Since God gives His perfect joy to us, we can choose to embrace and live in it regardless of what is going on in our lives and world. Do you really believe this? Have you decided to embrace and live in God's joy as you celebrate Christ's coming to earth for us as we gather this evening for the Christmas Eve Service and at your other gatherings?

Tuesday. Christmas Day. While you celebrate today, remember that the shepherds faced some serious obstacles to being joyful. Review Luke's brief account of the shepherds in chapter 2 of his gospel. From those verses and what we talked about on Sunday, list some of the obstacles to joy they faced. No obstacle, no matter how great or terrible can take away a believer's joy (see John 16:22). What obstacles to being joyful are you facing today, in this season? How are you going to, how are you responding to them?

Wednesday. The shepherds' experience of God's joy included as was evidenced by their overflowing praise to God (see Luke 2:20). Take a quick review of the last (probably hectic) week or so leading up to and including Christmas. Have you experienced joy? Have you been praising God? What do you think is the connection between a satisfying experience of joy and overflowing praise to God?

Thursday. The shepherds' experience of God's joy also included as was evidenced by their telling others the "good news of great joy" they had received (see Luke 2:17-18). We thought about this on December 16 as we focused on *preparing* the way for Christ. What have you done to prepare the way for Christ to come into the lives of people in this season? What do you think is the connection between a satisfying experience of joy and telling others the good news of this great joy?

Friday – Saturday. On Sunday we will return to the series in James. Pastor Jared will speak on 3:13-18. Read and think through these verses to help you get ready for our worship on Sunday.